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## QUESTIONS TO AMERICANS FROM LATIN AMERICANS

Presented to the  
School of Naval Command and Staff

by

Mr. Charles T. Vetter, Jr.

Inevitably the Navy will be in closer individual and collective contact with the peoples of Latin America.

With the explosion of ideas and the "transistor revolution," world dialogue takes on more and more importance. In this dialogue, Americans, in particular, require new sensitivities and new skills. A further requirement is the willingness to participate, and, hopefully, enjoy the interchange of ideas.

This is particularly true in Latin America and led to an attempt to identify some of the issues and

preoccupations that could either be the stimulus to discussion or the barrier to communication.

The following are some of the more stereotyped questions about the United States that are often in the minds of the people and are reflected in publications in Latin America. They all have a thread of logic; some are Communist-inspired, some are not. Most of them exploit facts or half-truths that are well known to the Latin American public. Out of politeness many of these questions are never directly asked, yet they represent areas where there are often sincere questioning and misconceptions. Americans going to Latin American countries should have facts on these subjects, so they will be able to discuss these questions intelligently and thereby create a perspective for both our accomplishments and our modern problems.

These questions have been collected in the process of extensive traveling in Latin America and from discussions over the past ten years with both Americans returning from Latin America and Latin American visitors to the United States.

Why do you let your businessmen get rich on our wealth by exploiting our natural resources and selling overpriced American goods to our people?

How can you have poverty and unemployment in your country when you are so rich? Couldn't this be remedied with scientific social planning?

What is the Alliance for Progress? Isn't this just another scheme to make us dependent on the Yankees--more of your aid with strings attached?

Why do you insist on our being anti-Communist? Are you really afraid of the Communists? Why can't you let us be friends with everyone?

Why don't you give the Panama Canal back to Panama? Isn't this a perfect example of American colonialism?

Why are you pressuring and starving poor little Cuba? They can't hurt you! Isn't this typical Yankee intervention?

You are supposed to be leaders of the democratic world--why do you support dictatorships (Paraguay,

Spain, etc.) and military juntas which are also dictatorships?

Why do you claim that you are helping the people of Latin America when your aid just makes the rich richer and does not help the poor people?

Why do you give us the kind of help that just makes our people more dependent and lazy? If you would just give us fair prices for the wealth that you take out of our country, we could help ourselves.

When you have a democratic Constitution, why are your people fighting for civil rights today?

Why do your people know so little about Latin America--our geography--our history? Doesn't this prove that your people are not interested in us?

What's wrong with Socialism? Poor countries cannot afford your *wasteful* Democracy!

What is the Peace Corps? Are they really political agents, or are they just young people who can't get jobs?

Is it true that the Russians are passing you in science because their educational system is better?

Is it not true that U.S. business interests determine American foreign policy in Latin America?

Why do the people from the United States who live in our countries look down on the people of Latin America? They live in capitalistic ghettos and never mix with the people or bother to learn our local language.

Why shouldn't our government trade with Communist countries. You do!

Why don't you recognize Communist China and bring it into the United Nations? You have recognized the U.S.S.R.

What is the difference between your Democratic Party and your Republican Party? Do they each have an ideology?

What is the current interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine?

Is your intervention in the Dominican Republic a return to your "Big Stick" policies of the 1920's and before? If we have a revolution you don't approve of in our country, will the United States intervene again?

Don't these demonstrations by your students and teachers, and other groups in your big cities, show that American policy in Vietnam is unpopular with your people?

### **BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH**

Mr. Charles T. Vetter, Jr. holds an A.B. from Hamilton College, an LL.B. from National University Law School, and an LL.M. from The George Washington University School of Law. He was a naval aviator during World War II and has served as Research and Liaison Officer, U.S. Department of State.

Mr. Vetter was assigned to Pakistan in 1955-56 as an advisor to the Director of Public Relations of the Government of East Pakistan and later in West Pakistan as a lecturer in political science with the U.S. Information Service. On his return from Pakistan he joined the Professional Training Staff of the U.S. Information Agency in 1956, where he was responsible for the training of domestic and overseas personnel in the fields of International Communications and Communism.

In 1959 he visited Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the Soviet Union during a three-month assignment as a supervisor and training officer for the American Guides at the American National Exhibition in Moscow.

In July 1962 Mr. Vetter was designated as Information Coordinator for the Office of Public Information, a position which he still holds. In this position he functions as the U.S. Information Agency's principal lecturer in the fields of International Communications and Communism and participates in government and nongovernment programs throughout the world.